

**Loudoun County Public Schools
Special Education Advisory Committee
Wednesday, October 7, 2020, 7:15 p.m.**

Executive Committee:

Chair - Sharon Tropsf

Immediate Past Chair – Dr. Carol Williams-Nickelson

Vice Chair - Planning Shehnaz Khan

Vice Chair - Membership Heidi Bunkua

Vice Chair - Communications Craig Metz

Secretary - Kathryn Rosenbrook

Liaisons:

Dr. Patricia Nelson, Director of Special Education

Beth Barts, School Board

Member Attendance: A quorum of SEAC voting members was confirmed with Vice Chair of Membership with 14 out of 16 members present.

Business Meeting Agenda October 7, 2020

I. Welcome and Call to Order, Sharon Tropsf, SEAC Chair 7:15

Explained the role of SEAC, regulations, and SEAC Leadership.

II. Public Comment.

1. Robin Forshay- Through Interpreter: How I make appointment with the teaching team because there is an issue with an Art class. My son is overwhelmed on how to get things completed without being in school. We are using CAD program. Also, have problems with Google meets. Kids can't find correct links. What am I supposed to do?
2. Beth Fowler-Community Statement has 11 Parent Signatures- Parents are extremely concerned with the pre-determination of special education services. LCPS is proposing services based on what administration is dictating and not based on hours or services needed/required for student. We are only being given a take it or leave approach. There should be continuum of service options available to meet each students' individual needs. LCPS needs to be held accountable to provide the special education services along a continuum as required by IDEA, the IEP team as a whole including parents should be making IEP service and placement decisions.

III. Reports and Updates.

A. Chair.

Sharon Tropsf

- Annual Report - Condensed report with top issues from the SEAC survey. Dr. Nelson, Director of Special Education has requested to have a retreat with the Executive Committee to review last years Annual Report. This retreat was in the process of being schedule when schools closed in March. SEAC has requested an update from Dr. Nelson for the 2019-2020 Annual Report on work completed.
- Shehnaz Kahn, Vice Chair of Planning has been working LCPS to update the SEAC webpage to increase information and make it easier to navigate.

- PTA/PTO Representatives - Letters have been sent to all school principal requesting a PTA/PTO representative from each school. SEAC Chair, Sharon Tropf spoke at the Hunt District PTA Leadership meeting to share about SEAC and the importance of have a PTA/PTO representative at each school to have a connection to the disability community within each school. Currently, SEAC has 22 PTA/PTO representatives from the schools. Member training for PTA/PTO Representatives will be done via video including Virginia FOIA. The Chair will be emailing each school board member requesting they assist in getting PTA/PTO representatives for each of the schools within their district.
- Nominating Committee – Dr. Carol Williams-Nickelson has sent an email request to existing members to solicit interest in taking on an executive committee position. All help is valuable and needed. Elections will be in November. Will accept nominations from the floor in November.
- SEAC Bylaws - Thorough review and ready for comments in December. Goal is to have them approved and published in early 2021.
- Current Issues - Hybrid and distance learning models are restricting IEP Teams from offering a continuum of services. Requested additional information on meeting the individual needs of students with IEPs.
- Equity Committee: SEAC has 1 seat on the Equity Committee, Craig Metz, Vice Chair of Communications has been nominated for this position.
- Special Education Task Force – Formed to address issues that are facing our special education community. The task force has met 3 times with significant support from the office of special education. The task for is focusing on the accessibility of current distance learning and services for students who are unable to access distance learning due the lack of a continuum of services. Meeting through October with a report for November meeting.
- SEAC Presentations:
 - o November 4, 2020 - Trauma and COVID 19 with Dr. Kelly Henderson
 - o December 2, 2020 - Transition Services for Developing Workplace and Independent Living Skills with Marianne Moore, VDOE, DARS and DBVI

B. Executive Committee.

- Next meeting October 28, 2020@ 6:30. Open to the public.

C. Subcommittees Formation.

- Three functioning committees. Prioritize the areas to focus on based on the survey. Work that began in March is incomplete but will use what has been done to move forward.

D. Parent Resource Services.

- Updated website with new information and online trainings. This year, trainings will be a mix of livestream and pre-recorded. These workshops include Transition Services Workshop and Mental Health Series.

E. School Board Liaison.

Beth Barts

- Community Outreach for information, Mr. Rob Doolittle will be the point of contact for communications. School Board members are allowed to send out newsletters quarterly and Ms. Barts will include SEAC and MSAAC information.

- MATA has had 900 students in person once a week, this has been successful and is providing information on how to continue to transition to in person learning for all students.
- On October 13, we should have more information on next steps in the Hybrid process to return to school in stages. Getting clarification on bringing students back and how many days could be allowed.
- School Board unanimously passed proclamations for Disability History and Awareness Month and Hispanic Heritage Month.

F. Department of Pupil Services and the Office of Special Education.

Dr. Asia Jones, Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Services.

- Thank you for time and support for helping our students. LCPS is working through ways services are to be provided and how to be do this during a virtual environment. Please reach out to your IEP teams to assist your student. Use the counseling services if needed. Working on ways to expand to get students back in school through stages. Assistive Technology was a need identified last year and LCPS has been recognized for Universal Design and Technical Assistance.

Dr. Nelson, Director of Special Education.

- Dr. Nelson has had some observations of Distance Learning classes. October 13th Stage 1 students are returning. This will be 2 days per week, for students on the ASOL curriculum. Disability Awareness month is declared for October. Also, October is Dyslexia Awareness month.

IV. Business.

A. Policy and Compliance Subcommittee.

Policy 5310, Special Education.

- LCPS proposes to change to allow amendments without a meeting. SEAC is having 2nd opportunity to review in light of what was previously proposed. SEAC has concerns over current practices and PWN statement. Many reports of violation of current School Board Policy 5310.
- **Recommendation: The School Board does not change the existing Policy 5310, Special Education to permit IEP amendments without an IEP meeting.**
 - o SEAC Members Vote: Passed unanimous.

Prior Notice and Parent (or Guardian) Consent.

- The new 5 paragraph language has raised significant concerns in the special education community. The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated many systemic disability related inequities within LCPS. Special Education students continue to be marginalized. The lack of accessibility, the inability to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities has significantly impacted our special education students, families, and caregivers. SEAC has received many reports of LCPS efforts to severely cut students' educational supports. Parents should not be pressured or requested to waive their rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or the Section 504. These rights have been put into law to protect students with disabilities because there is a long history of discrimination.
- The current School Board has repeatedly stated their support for educational equity. Recent actions by LCPS staff appear to be opposed to the School Board's position.

- **Recommendation 1:** SEAC finds that the IEP Prior Notice and Parent (or Guardian) Consent statement, the Least Restrictive Environment qualifying statements, and the Temporary Distance Learning Plans, do not meet the needs of student with disabilities.
 - o SEAC Members Vote: 12 yes, 1 abstain
- **Recommendation 2:** SEAC recommends that all such statements be removed with no further attempts to use such statements, and that LCPS follow guidance from Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), with in the U.S. Department of Education and Rehabilitative Services and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) on how to address the current circumstances while complying with the IDEA.
 - o SEAC Members Vote: Unanimous
- **Recommendation 3:** SEAC recommends that the LCPS IEP signature page follow the VDOE's Sample IEP Form Prior Notice and Parent Consent.
 - o SEAC Members Vote: Unanimous

Policy 8030, Harassment/Discrimination of Students.

This Policy combined with Policy for general education students and special education students. SEAC Recommends use PBIS instead of punishment. Students with disabilities have the highest disproportionality of all other minority groups. New policy does not use PBIS methodology, it does not offer an appeals process. Revisions are recommended to reduce discriminatory impacts.

- **Recommendation 1:** Revise the draft policy to replace references to discipline with consequences that require the use of PBIS instead of punishment.
 - o SEAC Members Vote: Unanimous
- **Recommendation 2:** Revise the draft policy to add an appeal process
 - o SEAC Members Vote: Unanimous
- **Recommendation 3:** Refer the policy for review by SEAC, MSAAC, and the LCPS PBIS staff, specifically looking for revisions to reduce discriminatory impacts.
 - o SEAC Members Vote: Unanimous

Policy 7560, Professional Conduct.

Draft Policy 7560 addresses unacceptable staff conduct that threatens the operation of our schools.

- **Recommendation 1:** Add language to (A)(1) to add parents and guardians to the list of people that staff are prohibited from bullying
 - o SEAC Members Vote: 12 yes, 1 abstain
- **Recommendation 2:** Add to the list in (A) a new item: 9. Falsification of school records, documents, statistics, or reports
 - o SEAC Members Vote: Unanimous

V. Adjourn 9:03 p.m.

